

# THE ORANGE COUNTY BETA REGISTER

## \$6 million more in cuts expected by Placentia-Yorba Linda district

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Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District officials are expected to present additional suggestions for how to cut another \$6.1 million from the 2010-11 school year budget at a public study session on March 9, after learning that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's recent budget proposal includes steep education cuts.

The proposed \$6.1 million in cuts would bring the district back to 2004-05 funding levels, Superintendent Dennis Smith said.

Smith made a public presentation about the budget issues before Tuesday's school board meeting.

The district has already spent months grappling with cutbacks and furlough negotiations to make up for \$15 million in budget cuts necessary between now and the 2011-12 school year. The governor's proposal would bring the district's cuts to more than \$21 million over three years.

The governor's proposed budget was released Jan. 8, but it took several weeks for local school officials to learn exactly how his proposal would impact PYLUSD funding.

Options discussed Tuesday for handling the cuts included raising class sizes, scaling back summer school and cutting a number of management and counseling positions

"It's heartbreaking," board member Jan Wagner said. "We always try to keep budget cuts out of the classroom ... but we've reached a point where everything is impacting kids."

The governor's budget has not been approved yet, but the school district has been told to prepare for at least \$6 million in additional cuts.

The district recently reached a furlough agreement with the teacher's union that is expected to save the district \$6 million. Furlough negotiations with classified employees are ongoing. Classified staff furloughs would save the district another \$1.6 million.

"We've come very close to meeting the target of \$15 million, but this added another \$6 million," Smith said.

Reducing the district's reserve levels from 3.5 percent of its general fund to 2 percent is one possibility under consideration, but that would still leave the district with \$3 million to cut from other areas, Smith said.

"That's something we've never considered before, frankly because we've had two years where the governor has made mid-year budget cuts and the reserves has been what's enabled us to make payroll," Wagner said.

If the district decides to lay off teachers, it must give them notice by March 15. Smith said he doesn't think teacher layoffs will be necessary. However, counseling, administrative and support staff positions may be cut. The district has to give classified staff a 45-day notice of layoffs.

Teaching staff will be reduced by not filling some of the positions vacated by the 90 teachers who opted to take early retirement this year, Wagner said.

The district initially planned to leave 20 of those positions vacant, but it may have to hire fewer teachers in order to fill the budget gap.

The district currently has 24 counselors and may cut four or five of those positions. Reducing summer school by only offering credit-recovery classes at a single site would save around \$200,000, Smith said. Cutting back or eliminating adult education programs could save another \$230,000.

The district is also looking at cutting 3.5 management positions, for a savings of roughly \$500,000.

There are currently no plans to make additional cuts from music or physical education programs, Smith said.

"Our bottom line is to make sure our district remains solvent and our doors remain open to our children," Wagner said. "We will do that."

The school board is holding special budget study sessions prior to its regularly schedule meetings. The next public study session is 4:30 p.m. March 9. The district is also soliciting feedback and budget suggestions on its Web site: [www.pylusd.k12.ca.us/budget](http://www.pylusd.k12.ca.us/budget).

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